



12

## First Peoples Fund releases Creative Economy Study

An in-depth study of the Native American art market – the first of its kind in the United States – has been released to elevate an awareness of the impact art has on the economic sustainability of artists, and entire communities.

First Peoples Fund administered the American Indian Creative Economy Market Study Project survey in the fall of 2011 through a partnership with the Northwest Area Foundation, Art-space, Colorado State University and Leveraging Investments in Creativity.

The survey took a close look at household economics, social networks and infrastructural needs of Native artists, examined the support programs available for them, and made the case for art as an economic driver of the community.

The project revealed that not only is art a viable underground market on the reservation, but it also has the potential to be a leading economic driver if fueled with the right resources.

The report also details the areas that Native artists rely on for success, including access to capital, financial education, increased knowledge of the distribution networks that support artists, access to markets and professional development training.

Download the full report and read more about the survey at [www.firstpeoplesfund.org/impact/market-study.html](http://www.firstpeoplesfund.org/impact/market-study.html).

## NATIVE NEWS

Native News compiled by  
Dyani Bingham  
([dyani\\_b@hotmail.com](mailto:dyani_b@hotmail.com))  
for *State of the Arts*

### Condolences – In Memory of Darrell Robes Kipp

Darrell Robes Kipp, educator, author, historian, filmmaker and one of the co-founders of the Piegan Institute in Browning, passed away on Nov. 21 at Blackfeet Community Hospital. He was 69.

A partnership with Visit Montana's website illustrated his love of the Blackfoot language and also the natural world. "Everything in Montana that you see, every waterfall, every river, every pass, everywhere you go has been described uniquely in Indian languages for thousands and thousands of years," Kipp says in the video on the state's tourism website: [visitmt.com/montana-stories/darrell-kipp/](http://visitmt.com/montana-stories/darrell-kipp/).

With the heart of a poet, Kipp inspired countless people with his humor and common-sense perspective. His legacy will continue, but he will be greatly missed.

The full story of his life and legacy begins on page 1.

### Q&A with Desja Eagletail, Crow musician

Up-and-coming musician Desja Eagletail (Crow) has been gaining buzz lately in Indian Country for her work as a singer and motivational speaker. Currently studying Music Business at MSU Billings, Desja is honing her skills as a singer and performer while strengthening her business acumen, which will come in handy as she is currently working on her first CD of original music.

At only 21 years old, Desja has already been performing and giving motivational speeches throughout the Northwest for three years now, proving that she is wise beyond her years.

I asked Desja to share some advice with us on what it means to be a young Native musician in today's world.

**Q:** What are some of the biggest challenges facing Native musicians today? What are some of the greatest rewards?

**A:** The biggest challenge I see for Native musicians is breaking into the mainstream music industry. In the TV and film industry, we have actors such as Adam Beach and the up-and-coming Tatanka Means. But what musician has done that?

**Q:** What makes Native musicians unique?

**A:** We have a very unique perspective of the world. The way I see it, all indigenous people live in two worlds. We are living in the present, modern world, but we also have the stories and cultural ways of the ancient

world of our ancestors that are still a part of us. Natives have a different view of the world, which is often a result of what we have learned from our Native ways and the modern western ways. As Native musicians, we are able to honor our culture and relate it to the surrounding world through song.

**Q:** Why is music an important art form in Indian country?

**A:** Music has always been a very integral part of Native culture and has been vital to the preservation of our culture. Looking at music as a whole, it gives humans a medium to express themselves. People in Indian Country today look for music that identifies with them, that roots them in their cultural ways but also expresses their struggles and thoughts as a Native in today's world.

**Q:** Can you tell us a little about yourself?

**A:** I love to dance traditional Crow style and am learning more about my culture every day. I live with my family and couldn't

live without them! I have a baby brother who I love being with. I have a very strong relationship with our God, the creator, and he's ALWAYS been there for me!

**Q:** What is your advice to Native musicians trying to make it today?

**A:** Learn as much as you can and always keep learning. Learn about yourself; who you are, what you stand for, why you want to be a musician, what you want to be remembered for. Learn about the world; about different cultures. Learn as much as you can about music – composition, songwriting, different

genres and instrumentation.

Become a businessperson; make sure you can support yourself no matter what job you are doing. If you want to have a career with music, you have to treat it as a business.

Keep your reputation in good standing. Be smart with money! Always work hard, keep a positive attitude and always be ethical about everything in life.

### Check it out: "Indian Relay" on Montana PBS

Excitement has been building over "Indian Relay," the new documentary airing on



Myles Murray and his aunt, Molly Murray, train their relay horses near Browning. (Photo courtesy of Charles Dye)

Montana PBS that follows three teams as they prepare for and compete in the exciting, perilous and unpredictable Indian Relay season. Exploring themes of competition, perseverance, brotherhood and sportsmanship, this documentary is a thrilling portrait of horseracing that is distinctly American Indian.

With a combination of hard work, training and natural ability, the three teams capture our hearts and minds as they prepare for the Indian Relay National Championship. Filmed on the Blackfeet and Crow reservations in Montana and the Fort Hall Reservation in Idaho, this is a must-see documentary for all Montanans.

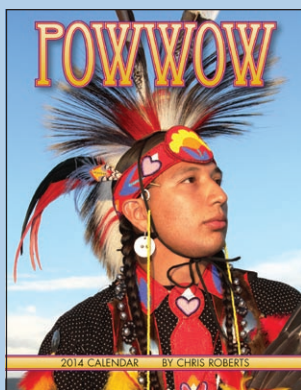
Indian Relay will air on Montana PBS at 7 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 30. For more information visit: [www.montanapbs.org/IndianRelay/](http://www.montanapbs.org/IndianRelay/).

### Spotlight on Native Poetry: A resource for educators

Poetry is not often the first thing that comes to mind when one thinks of Native art, but it should be considering the plethora of Native poets writing in Montana today. Inspired by our relationships with the land and history, and exploring the themes of love, loss, alienation and acceptance, Native poets help us visit places we've never been or maybe revisit places we know all too well.

Celebrating poetry as both an art form and a tool to educate youth, the Montana Office of Public Instruction published, *Birthright: Born to Poetry – A Collection of Montana Indian Poets*, compiled by Dorothea M. Susag for the secondary level. Featuring prominent Montana Indian poets, like Victor Charlo (Salish), Lois Red Elk (Dakota/Lakota), the late James Welch (Blackfeet/Gros-Ventre), Joseph R. McGeshick (Assiniboine/Sioux/Chippewa), Henry Real Bird (Crow) and others, this compilation has tools for educators to use in the classroom as they implement Indian Education for All. Even though the tools are meant for students, adults too will benefit from reading these poems and learning more about the Native poets that call Montana home.

For more information, visit [opi.mt.gov](http://opi.mt.gov) and search for *Birthright: Born to Poetry*.



## Calendars celebrate native dance

Missoula photographer Chris Roberts has paid his dues on the powwow circuit. He has been involved in the powwow world for nearly 50 years, beginning as a grass dancer, then as a traditional dance participant. This year, at 65, he was among a handful of Chicken dancers competing in the Golden Age category – and one of very few non-Indian dancers on the circuit.

His popular powwow calendars are testament to his decades of involvement in tribal dances. "I'm probably the best known powwow photographer in the country," he says. "My biggest asset is being a dancer. I'm photographing from the inside out."

Roberts gathered photos for his 2014 calendars – both the annual powwow calendar and "Powwow Youth, The Next Generation" – while dancing on the powwow circuit all summer. "This is a photographed-in-Montana project," Roberts says.

Born in London, Roberts and his family immigrated to the U.S. when he was 8 years old, settling in Spokane. His Boy Scout leader was a Blackfeet Indian, and introduced his troupe to native traditions.

His family moved to Missoula while he was still in high school and his enthusiasm for dance continued to grow. Roberts was a member of the committee that established the first Kyi-Yo Powwow at The University of Montana and his Scout troupe earned national recognition for native dance.

Over the years, the photographer has become a historian, tracing the ever-shifting dance forms of a "constantly changing and evolving cultural milieu."

"Dance styles come and go," he notes. But one constant is the deep connections he's made with generations of dancers. "People share their culture in a very social manner," he says. After all these years, "it feels like family to me."

Roberts recommends his calendars to "anyone interested in American Indian culture and the traditions of contemporary Indian country."

This marks the 17th year that Roberts has published these calendars, which are distributed by Meadowlark Media of Missoula in Indian country. The retail price of is \$14.95 each, and calendars may be ordered by calling 888-728-2180 or emailing [info@powwowcountry.com](mailto:info@powwowcountry.com). Discounts are available to schools and youth groups for fundraising projects.

Roberts has also published two photographic books, *Powwow Country* and *People of the Circle*, and is at work on a third.

– Kristi Niemeyer